

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6898

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 1090

L I M D I S

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 250312

SUMMARY: AFTER SEARCHING RE-EXAMINATION OF ALL ASPECTS U.S.
POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN, I CONCLUDE THAT FUNDAMENTAL U.S.
INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES HERE ARE UNCHANGED BY ADVENT OF DAOUD
REGIME. AFGHANISTAN REMAINS A DELICATE FACTOR IN PRESENT REGIONAL
POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM. A CONTINUED U.S. POLITICAL PRESENCE
UNDERScoreD BY SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SUPPORT PLAY

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SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN HELPING GOA MAINTAIN NON-ALIGNED POSITION

WHILE UNDER UNAVOIDABLE SHADOW OF THE NORTHERN BEAR. DAOUD REMAINS A DEDICATED AFGHAN NATIONALIST. HIS CONTROL OF REGIME IS SLOWLY STRENGTHENING, AND NORMALCY IN GOVERNMENT NOW RETURNING. HOWEVER, WHILE WE SHOULD CONTINUE MAINTAIN SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HERE, WE WILL UNDERTAKE DETAILED REVIEW OF ALL AID PROJECTS AS WELL AS OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES TO ASSURE THEY MEET CURRENT DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA OR OTHER APPROPRIATE TESTS OF EFFECTIVENESS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS DEPT IS AWARE, WE INITIATED IN DECEMBER A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN WHICH CULMINATED IN ALL-DAY COUNTRY TEAM MEETING WITH SPECIAL REVIEW GROUP FEBRUARY 4, ATTENDED ALSO BY COUNTRY DIRECTOR CONSTABLE (NEA/PAB) AND DIRECTOR AID/ASIA/NE JAMES. PRIOR TO MEETING A SPECIAL INTER-AGENCY REVIEW GROUP OF JUNIOR AND MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICERS UNDER DIRECTION OF DCM HAD SPENT SEVERAL LENGTHY SESSIONS RE-EXAMINING KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR TRADITIONAL POLICY AND PROGRAMS HERE TO TRY DETERMINE (A) WHETHER TRADITIONAL PREMISES WERE INDEED VALID AND (B) WHETHER CHANGE OF REGIME LAST JULY ALTERS SITUATION SIGNIFICANTLY. THEIR PROVOCATIVE REPORT TO COUNTRY TEAM CHALLENGED FUNDAMENTALLY THE TRADITIONAL STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN, AND LESS FUNDAMENTALLY SOME ON-GOING PROGRAM PRIORITIES. TEXT OF SPECIAL REVIEW GROUP'S REPORT TOGETHER WITH SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AT FEBRUARY 4 MEETING BEING SUBMITTED SEPARATELY BY AIRGRAM SO THAT ADDRESSEES CAN

HAVE FULL FLAVOR OF THEIR THOUGHTFUL DISSENT. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE MY CONCLUSIONS STEMMING FROM THIS REVIEW, CONCURRED IN BY ALL PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF COUNTRY TEAM.

2. EXISTING U.S. POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN IS BASED ON THE "COUNTRY POLICY STATEMENT" (NSCIG/NEA 69-23) APPROVED BY THE NSC INTER-DEPARTMENT GROUP FOR THIS REGION ON AUGUST 6, 1969. BY AND LARGE THAT STATEMENT REMAINS EXTRAORDINARILY PERSUASIVE. ANY REWRITING OF THE DOCUMENT WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF HISTORICAL FACT THAT AFGHAN "EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRACY" NO LONGER IN BEING. ISSUE OF SIZE OF AFGHAN DEFENSE EXPENDITURES IS LESS PROMINENT AS U.S. CONCERN TODAY, WHILE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE BECOMING MORE ACUTE AND DESERVES SHARPER TREATMENT. THAT SAID, HOWEVER, MUCH OF DOCUMENT REMAINS PERCEPTIVE AND PRESCIENT. SECTION ON U.S.

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OBJECTIVES (PAGES 5-6) SEEMS TO ME FULLY AS VALID TODAY AS WHEN WRITTEN AND HARDLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO IMPROVEMENT.

3. OVERRIDING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPECIAL REVIEW GROUP'S REPORT AND EXISTING POLICY CENTERS ON DIFFERING DEFINITION OF U.S. INTERESTS (OR LACK OF INTERESTS) IN AFGHANISTAN. REVIEW GROUP, WHICH DEFENDED ITS VIEWS WITH ELOQUENCE AND TENACITY, ARGUES THAT "U.S. INTEREST IN REGIONAL STABILITY IS NOT RPT NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY EVENTS

IN AFGHANISTAN. EXISTENCE OR NON-EXISTENCE OF ANY PARTICULAR FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN KABUL, OF ANY PARTICULAR BORDERS FOR AFGHANISTAN, OR ANY POLITICAL LEANING BY AFGHAN AUTHORITIES, IS UNIMPORTANT TO U.S. REGIONAL INTERESTS." ... MOREOVER, "U.S. DOES NOT HAVE ABILITY SIGNIFICANTLY TO INFLUENCE EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN" IN ANY CASE. GROUP RECOGNIZES VARIOUS THREATS TO U.S. INTERESTS IN POSSIBLE SCENARIOS INVOLVING PAKISTAN OR IRAN, BUT DENIES TRADITIONAL VIEW THAT EVENTS HERE CAN MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOME OF SUCH SCENARIOS.

4. WHILE I BELIEVE THE GROUP'S CONCLUSION MERITS THE COMPLETE AIRING IT RECEIVED HERE, I THOROUGHLY DISAGREE. AS OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNTRY TEAM POINTED OUT, PERCEPTIONS IN PAK, IRANIAN, SOVIET OR CHINESE MINDS OF EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN CAN HAVE MAJOR IMPACT ON THEIR POLICIES THROUGHOUT THIS REGION, WHATEVER ANY COOL, "OBJECTIVE" ASSESSMENT OF AN AFGHAN "THREAT" MIGHT BE. I CONCUR FULLY WITH STATEMENT IN 1969 DOCUMENT (PAGE 5) THAT "EXCESSIVE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFGHAN AFFAIRS WOULD MATERIALLY INCREASE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SUBVERSIVE VULNERABILITY OF IRAN, PAKISTAN AND TO LESSER DEGREE INDIA." THERE ARE SOME POINTS IN '69 POLICY STATEMENT WHERE "COLD WAR" PHRASEOLOGY SHOULD PERHAPS BE MODIFIED IN LIGHT OF WORLDWIDE U.S.-USSR MOVE TOWARD DETENTE. BUT I BELIEVE THAT WERE SOVIETS TO PERCEIVE AFGHANISTAN AS EITHER DISINTEGRATING OR MOVING TOWARD A TRUE SATELLITE POSITION, THIS WOULD TEMPT SOVIETS GREATLY AS OPPORTUNITY TO PUT INCREASED PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN AND/OR IRAN, VERY POSSIBLY IN COORDINATION WITH INDIA SO FAR AS PAKISTAN IS CONCERNED. HOW THIS TEMPTATION COULD FAIL TO DAMAGE U.S. REGIONAL INTERESTS I CANNOT SEE.

5. SO FAR AS RECENT CHANGE OF REGIME IS CONCERNED, ALL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE DURING FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF DAOUD'S RULE REINFORCES OUR INITIAL ESTIMATE THAT HE REMAINS A DEDICATED AFGHAN NATIONALIST AND SECRET

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PATRIOT, DETERMINED AT ALL COSTS TO PRESERVE A BALANCE OF EXTERNAL POLITICAL INFLUENCES IN COUNTRY WHICH WILL PERMIT MAINTENANCE OF AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE. NATURE OF EARLY SUPPORT FOR HIS COUP LED TO AT LEAST TEMPORARY, UNEASY SITUATION IN WHICH COMMUNIST PARTY ELEMENTS HAVE ACHIEVED UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF INFLUENCE IN SOME MINISTRIES. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION OF AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS TILTED ONLY IMPERCEPTIBLY IF AT ALL IN SOVIET DIRECTION, AND THERE ARE MULTIPLE SIGNS OF DAOUD'S EAGERNESS TO BUILD NEW POLITICAL BONDS TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS INDIA AND ARAB STATES RATHER THAN BECOME MORE ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENT ON SOVIETS. HE HAS, OF COURSE, REITERATED GOA'S DESIRE FOR "SAME KIND OF FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP" AND IF POSSIBLE MORE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM U.S. HIS SPOKESMEN HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT MOTIVE IS SAME ONE TRADITIONALLY EXPRESSED OVER YEARS BY MONARCHY: I.E., FOREMOST, A DESIRE FOR U.S. POLITICAL PRESENCE TO HELP BALANCE OVERWHELMING RUSSIAN SPECIFIC

GRAVITY, AND SECONDARILY ECONOMIC AID FOR DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.
WHILE PRECEDING SEVEN MONTHS HAVE BEEN ROCKY AT TIMES, SHIP OF
STATE NOW SAILING HERE INTO GRADUALLY CALMER WATERS WITH AFGHAN
NORMALCY BEGINNING RETURN ON MANY SIDES. SO LONG AS DAOUD REMAINS
HEALTHY, I BELIEVE HE WILL REMAIN IN CONTROL AND WILL ALSO REMAIN
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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
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INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
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L I M D I S

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FROM AMBASSADOR

6. AT PRESENT, THEREFORE, I BELIEVE U.S. INTERESTS AND AFGHANISTAN'S
REMAIN PARALLEL. OUR PROGRAM DECISIONS HERE SHOULD REFLECT THAT
PARALLELISM, AND SHOULD ALWAYS BE MADE WITH THE OVERRIDING
POLITICAL INTERESTS IN MIND WHICH HAVE FROM THE INCEPTION OF U.S.
ASSITANCE TO AFGHANISTAN BEEN THE BEDROCK JUSTIFICATION FOR THAT
ASSISTANCE. ON INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS, AID'S LEGISLATIVE MANDATE AND
DEVELOPMENTAL CRITERIA MUST OF COURSE BE MET. BUT AFGHANISTAN MUST
CONTINUE TO HAVE SOME REASONABLE CLAIM ON THE AID RESOURCE PIE,
NOT JUST AS ONE OF THE 25 "LEAST DEVELOPED," BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY
FOR THE U.S. POLITICAL INTEREST IN HELPING PRESERVE ITS INDEPENDENCE.

7. ON OTHER FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES THERE IS LITTLE DISAGREEMENT AMONG
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THE REVIEW GROUP, THE COUNTRY TEAM AND OUR EXISTING POLICY. WE SHOULD

CONTINUE TO PROMOTE BEHIND THE SCENES AS BEST WE CAN RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN, A PROSPECT WHICH LOOKS REASONABLY PROMISING OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS. SO FAR AS AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED, WE KNOW ONLY TOO WELL FROM NOT SO ANCIENT HISTORY THAT U.S. DIRECT EFFORTS AT PROVIDING GOOD OFFICES OR MEDIATION OF THE "PUSHTUNISTAN" DISPUTE ARE NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED BECAUSE OF THE DEEP-SEATED EMOTIONAL NATURE OF THIS THORNY CONFLICT. NONETHELESS, SHOULD THE AFGHANS PURSUE RELENTLESSLY THEIR CAMPAIGN TO DISMEMBER THEIR NEIGHBOR, AS THEY MAY WELL DO, OUR INTERESTS IN PAKISTAN'S STABILITY COULD AT SOME POINT IMPELL US TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE THAN WE MIGHT OTHERWISE CHOOSE. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE SHOULD NOW BE TRYING TO THINK OF POSSIBLE COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS WHICH AT SOME FUTURE MOMENT COULD DIVERT A CRISIS FROM CONFLICT TO NEGOTIATION. WE SHOULD CONTINUE IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, TO REMAIN AS FAR AWAY FROM THE ROLE OF "MESSENGER BOY" AS POSSIBLE. THE RECENT AZIZ AHMED VISIT TO KABUL WAS A TINY BEGINNING OF HIGH-LEVEL DIRECT BILATERAL COMMUNICATION. THIS FIRST CROCUS WILL PROBABLY FREEZE IF HISTORY IS ANY TEACHER, BUT MEANWHILE WE SHOULD WATER IT DISCREETLY IN BOTH ISLAMABAD AND KABUL.

8. THE REVIEW GROUP RECOMMENDED AND I HEARTILY AGREE THAT WE SHOULD UNDERTAKE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE HERE A SEARCHING, CANDID REVIEW OF ALL OUR PROGRAM AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES, DEVELOPMENTAL OR OTHERWISE. THEY PROPOSED CERTAIN SENSIBLE DEVELOPMENTAL CRITERIA WHICH I CAN ENDORSE, PROVIDED THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ALSO RECEIVE ADEQUATE WEIGHT. OUR USIS, EMBASSY, AND MILITARY TRAINING EFFORTS WILL BE REVIEWED AGAINST OTHER APPROPRIATE TESTS OF EFFECTIVENESS STEMMING FROM THE OVERALL POLICY OBJECTIVES DISCUSSED

ABOVE. WHILE I BELIEVE A CONTINUED SUBSTANTIAL U.S. PRESENCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE, I BY NO MEANS ASSUME THAT EVERYTHING WE ARE DOING HERE IS BEING DONE WELL OR THAT IT NECESSARILY MIGHT BE DONE AT ALL. WE WILL LOOK PARTICULARLY CAREFULLY AT AID'S NEW LEGISLATION IN ASSESSING THE VIABILITY OF OUR OWN ON-GOING PROJECTS AND EVALUATING NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS AS WE RECEIVE THEM FROM THE GOA. I SHARE FULLY THE REVIEW GROUP'S CONCLUSION THAT OUR PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS ARE A PARTICULARLY VALUABLE PART OF THE TOTAL U.S. PRESENCE HERE AND SHOULD BE CONTINUED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. HOWEVER,

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THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS OF UNDER-EMPLOYMENT OF PCV'S WHICH WE WILL DEAL WITH AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE IN OUR REVIEW TO AVOID UNNECESSARY POLITICAL BACKLASH FROM DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

9. WE CONCLUDE THAT THE OVERALL LEVEL OF THE U.S. PRESENCE IS NOT EXCESSIVE IN LIGHT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS HERE AND THE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY OF AFGHAN SOCIETY FOR A FOREIGN PRESENCE. NONETHELESS, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO CONTINUE PROJECTS OR BEGIN NEW ONES UNLESS WE ARE CERTAIN AMERICAN ADVISORS ARE STRONGLY DESIRED BY GOA AND THEIR SERVICES ARE OR WILL BE FULLY UTILIZED. OUR PROJECT REVIEW WILL GIVE CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS FACTOR IN EACH CASE. THE "STYLE" OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE HAS ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH. WE WILL BE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO GIVE MORE LANGUAGE TRAINING TO ALL AMERICANS IN ALL AGENCIES AND TO PROVIDE A MUCH MORE THOROUGH ORIENTATION IN AFGHAN CULTURE TO NEW ARRIVALS. WE WILL ALSO MOVE FURTHER IN THE DIRECTION OF REDUCING SOMEWHAT THE "CRADLE TO GRAVE" RANGE OF PERSONAL SERVICES WHICH HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO AMERICANS HERE SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL BECAUSE OF THE GRAVELY DEFICIENT, UNRELIABLE NATURE OF BASIC SERVICES AVAILABLE COMMERCIALY.

10. I CONCLUDE THAT OUR SMALL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TRAINING EFFORT, INVOLVING ONLY ABOUT A DOZEN AFGHAN OFFICERS A YEAR GOING TO THE U.S., PROVIDES US AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL PAY OUT IN A NUMBER OF RESPECTS. SO LONG AS THE AFGHANS WISH US TO KEEP THIS TINY FOOT IN THEIR MILITARY DOOR, WE SHOULD DO SO. THE \$200,000-ODD ANNUALLY IT COSTS THE USG IS AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT.

11. WHILE NEW GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS WILL CAUSE SOME MARGINAL DISLOCATIONS IN OUR CULTURAL AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS, WE FEEL CONFIDENT WE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE KIND OF CREATIVE EFFORTS WHICH USIS HAS DEVELOPED HERE IN RECENT YEARS. I BELIEVE THEY ARE WELL JUSTIFIED AND WELL EXECUTED, ALTHOUGH THEY TOO WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE DETAILED REVIEW OUTLINED ABOVE.

12. ONE EFFECTIVE WAY TO INDICATE AND FURTHER OUR INTEREST IN THIS COUNTRY IS THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL VISITS. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD, WE BELIEVE, ENCOURAGE SUCH VISITS FROM EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS
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AND CODELS WHO ARE TOURING THE AREA. USIS AND CU CAN ALSO BE HELPFUL IN SCHEDULING MORE MAJOR CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS IN KABUL.

13. OVER ALL THEN, AFTER A PROVO
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